

CHILD SAFETY

Home accidents claim more children's lives than the five leading diseases combined. Not only are accidents the largest single cause of death in children under 15 years of age, but they also are the leading cause of permanent and temporary disability in children more than 1 year of age.

Every year in the U.S 12 to 14 million children (or one in four) under 15 years of age need medical attention because of accidental injury.

Professionals agree most childhood accidental deaths and disabilities are preventable. Child safety requires:

Foresight- Think ahead of your child so you can guide his or her natural curiosity.

Time- Your time, to teach the right way to do things, with patient supervision.

Discipline- A reasonable, fair, consistent, understandable discipline that will lead your child to self-discipline.

Example- Children absorb their parents attitude and copy their behavior. Parents must make sure that their way of doing things are reasonable and fair.

Your child must learn to do things by trying, so try to understand what your child wants to do and then help by teaching the child how to do it safely and expertly as muscles and coordination develop.

Do not overprotect. Minor mishaps-bumps, bruises, scratches and scrapes are part of the growing and learning.

Following simple precautions and basic safety rules can help protect your child from serious injury.

FALLS

For children 1 to 4 years of age, home falls are the leading cause of accidental death and serious injury.

TO PREVENT FALLS

Never leave babies unattended on anything that they can fall from. Turning your back even for a moment to get a bottle or diaper can be risky.

- Always leave sides up on baby's crib.
- Use a harness when the baby is sitting in a high chair, carriage, stroller, infant seat, or shopping cart.
- Keep all children seated when they ride in shopping carts. They could fall out or tip the cart over.
- Use safety gates at all stairways to prevent the creeping baby from falling downstairs. Avoid accordion gates with large opening that can trap a child's neck.
- Securely fasten doors that lead to stairways, driveways, and storage areas. Guards at upstairs windows may prevent falls.
- Window screens do not prevent falls. Screens keep insects out, but are not strong enough to keep children from falling. Unguarded windows opened only 6-inches pose a danger to children under 10 years of age. Move chairs and other furniture away from windows to discourage climbing. Window guards are available at most hardware stores. Do not put guards in windows used as fire exits.
- Be sure stairways are well lit and never use stairs for storage. Install treads and handrails on them. Do not let children play on stairs.
- Do not use small rugs that skid. In the bathroom, the tub should have a bath mat or "no slip" strips to prevent slipping.
- Be sure play equipment meant for climbing is sturdy and low. Climbing equipment should be placed on cushioned surfaces such as bark, sand, or mats.
- Mark glass doors and low windows with posters, decals, or colored tape to prevent children from running into them.
- Avoid the use of infant walkers
- Teach children not to run in the house, and have them pick up their toys to avoid dangerous obstacles.
- Wipe up spills promptly.

ELECTRICITY

- Cover electrical outlets or install safety plugs to keep children from trying to stick things into them.
- Unplug electrical appliances when not in use and store them out of reach—this is particularly important around kitchen and bathroom sinks.
- Secure electrical cords away from areas where children's legs or arms could become entangled in them. Never run electrical cords under rugs or through doorways. A trash bag tie or rubber band is ideal to secure electrical cords to table legs- -don't use staples that could puncture the cord.
- Check electrical cords for breaks, frays or cuts- -don't use these appliances until the cord is repaired.
- Make sure faceplate's on outlets and light switches are not broken, exposing live electrical parts.

BURN PREVENTION

- Place hot beverages away from the edge of tables and high enough to prevent children from pulling them over onto themselves.
- Turn pot and pan handles in when cooking.
- Set water heater temperature at 100 degrees to 120 degrees F or install an anti-scald mixing valve on faucets (laundrying, cleaning, and dish washing may require higher water temperatures).
- Keep matches, lighters, and lit cigarettes out of children's sight and reach.
- Install a smoke detector close to the kitchen and between bedrooms. Do a safety check every month.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen (2.5lb."ABC" dry chemical type).
- Do not use portable, unvented heaters. Use protective screens around woodstoves and fireplaces.
- Install protective shield over radiators and heater vents if they are too hot.
- Don't overload electrical outlets. Don't use extension cords that are too small for the electrical load you place on them.
- Store flammable liquids in safety cans in an outdoor area.
- Establish a fire escape plan and practice an escape drill monthly.
- Teach children to "stop, drop, and roll" in case of clothing fires.

CHOKING/ STRANGULATION/ SUFFOCATION

- Check for hanging cords, plant vines, frayed blanket edging that children could wrap around their neck.
- Measure crib slats, if there is more than 2 3/8 inches between slats, a baby's head can become wedged between them or the baby's torso could slip between them, strangulating the child.
- Make sure crib mattress fits snugly and tie bumper pads securely so the baby's head cannot get caught between them and the crib frame.
- Remove soft pillows, floppy toys, or loose-fitting plastic sheeting from cribs and playpens to prevent suffocation.
- Store garbage bags, plastic storage bags, plastic grocery bags out of children's reach.
- Tie used plastic dry-cleaning bags into knots and throw them away.
- Avoid string closures on children's clothing
- Don't use hair barrettes, pony-tail holders or jewelry less than 3/8-inch diameter.
- Check stuffed toys to be sure eyes and other parts are secure.
- Give infants and toddlers only toys too large to swallow. Toys or removable toy parts less than 3/8-inch diameter are choking hazards.
- Never place an infant or young child on a waterbed to sleep. Infants and young children often suffocate when they are unable to turn over in a waterbed.
- Remove doors on old refrigerators and freezers. Children like to hide in these and may suffocate.
- Openings in play equipment or furniture can strangle a child if the opening is between 3 and 9 inches or angle less than 55 degrees.

POISON PREVENTION

- Lock medicine cabinets, or place medicine well out of reach of curious children.
- Check under the bathroom sink and remove cleanser, shampoo, lotion, toilet bowl cleaner, alcohol, and similar products. Put a childproof lock on the cabinet door. (About 20 percent of accidental poisonings occur in the bathroom.)
- Place vitamins, cosmetics, perfume, mouthwash, shoe polish, and similar products out of children's reach.
- Have peeling paint tested for lead. Consult a professional to remove or encapsulate peeling paint if positive for lead.
- Make sure imported toys have non-toxic painted surfaces.
- Read labels on crayons, paints, clay, and other materials to ensure they are non-toxic.

- Keep plant food, fertilizers, paint thinners, gasoline, insecticides, pesticides, and similar products in a locked area.
- Keep poisonous indoor and outdoor plants in an area inaccessible to children.

PREVENTION OF DROWNING

- Don't leave children alone in the bath for any reason; it takes only seconds to drown.
- If your home is near a swimming pool, creek, pond, irrigation canal, or other body of water make sure children cannot wonder off to it by themselves and fall in. Enclose swimming pools with a fence at least 4-6 feet high and always lock gates. Check local and state regulations regarding fence requirements around swimming pools.
- If you use a wading or splashing pool, drain, and clean it after each use. Store the pool where children cannot reach it. Always watch children when they are using a wading pool because they can drown in just a little water.